

Teaching Multiculturalism through Folktales

Trickster Tales

9th – 12th Grade

Outline of Activities for an English Language Arts Teaching Unit

Materials/Media:

- “Trickster” tales picture books such as: *A Ring of Tricksters: Animal Tales From America, the West Indies and Africa*, by Virginia Hamilton; *Lapin Plays Possum: Trickster Tales from the Louisiana Bayou*; by Sharon Armes Doucet; *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl*, by Virginia Hamilton; *Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains*, by Barbara Knutson; *Just a Minute*, by Yuyi Morales; *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale*, by Minfong Ho and Saphan Ros; *Tiger Soup: An Anansi Story from Jamaica* by Frances Temple; *Coyote and the Fire Stick*, by Barbara Diamond Goldin; *Jabuti the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon*, by Gerald McDermott. (See book list for more titles.)
- World map
- Internet access for independent research

• Objectives:

- Explore other cultures through trickster tales
- Explore the oral tradition of stories and storytelling (Knowledge)
- Distinguish between a folk tale, legend and fairy tale (Application)
- Explore elements of literature such as plot, conflict, theme, symbolism through folktales (Application)
- Explore universal themes such as strong vs. weak, death, ascribing meaning to events in the world (Application)
- Write the knowledge you gain from each culture through the stories, such as food, language, politics, history, celebrations (Application)
- Tell or share your information with classmates (Analysis)
- Write your own trickster tale, using elements of literature including plot, conflict, and theme (Application)

- Write a different ending to one of the tales you read (Application)
- Create a multicultural journal to record information about the different trickster stories and the cultures they come from (Application)

Procedures:

- Begin unit with a "Gallery Walk." Students walk around and write answers to questions posed at top of on large sheets of paper posted around the room:

1. Name someone you feared when you were younger (real or imaginary)
2. How did you get over that fear?
3. Name someone you know, or a character in a book, TV show or movie who plays tricks on others
4. Name a trick that was played on you or that you played on another

-TTW explain to the students that they will be learning about different cultures through reading multicultural trickster tales. TTW facilitate discussion about storytelling and traditions; literary elements; universal themes

- TTW divide students into pairs to read two trickster tales together. Tales will be paired for comparing and contrasting, such as *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale* with *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl*; and *Love and Roast Chicken* with *Just a Minute*.

-TSW answer study questions, make Venn diagrams of what is similar and what is different, and share with class

-TSW use bookmark graphic organizers to list information/questions as they read & share

-*Think, pair, share*- TSW will report to class as whole on the stories they read

-TTW give various questions for discussion

-TTW find a storyteller to come to class to tell stories, teach the tradition of storytelling

May find storyteller at <http://www.activeculture.info/educationalSearch.asp>

or <http://www.alabamastorytelling.com/programs.html>

-TSW write in dialogue journal each day, of thoughts, impressions and questions related to stories and concepts. (Right-hand side of page is for student comments, left-hand side for teacher comments/replies)

-TTW give students Bookmark graphic organizers to keep up with themes, literary elements

- TSW ask parents, grandparents or guardians about folktales from their childhood, then write down tale and share with class.

Examples of questions for discussion:

- What do you learn about the culture from the story and illustrations?
- Compare the main characters in the two books assigned. What do they have in common? What's different? Create a Venn diagram
- Why do you think cultures create trickster tales?
- What is common in these stories? (Example: humor.)
- Are the tricksters physically strong characters or weak?
- What conflict and themes do you perceive in one animal outsmarting another?
- What can you tell about a culture from the language? List new words or phrases.

One step up:

- TSW invite a parent or grandparent to come to the class and tell or read a folk tale from your culture or a region that interests him or her

- TSW perform research on a topic related to story. Examples: A dialect in the story, how it evolved (i.e.: Gullah, Creole.); the story ring of the slave trade {Africa to Caribbean to U.S. and back to Africa (Sierra Leone)}; Cultural or political elements of the region which led to the appeal of trickster tales. (i.e.: feudal system in Cambodia; slavery in the Americas)
- Realia: Bring an object from the culture of one of the folktales you've studied. It can be food, a costume, or another artifact.

Accommodations/Modifications:

-ELLs: The fact that most of the stories are picture books will help ELLs and students with reading challenges because pictures illustrate and clarify vocabulary

-ELLs: Be careful in giving the stories using strong Creole or Gullah dialects to new learners of English because it might be confusing. Pair ELLs with fluent English speakers to read books using dialect.

ELLs: When creating small groups for discussion, make a group with a variety of English proficiency levels to allow for peer tutoring.

-Small group discussions allow ELLs to practice speaking English in small groups

- Provide for peer coaching/tutoring of ELLs and/or Exed

Informal Assessments:

Graphic organizers- check bookmark more frequently for ELLs, Exed

Walk around, listen to groups, answer questions

Check dialogue journals periodically, more frequently for ELLs or Exed, to ensure they understand concepts, language, vocabulary

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Vocabulary

Words to look up:

Literary Devices

Identify the following:

1. Characterization
2. Climax
3. Conflict
4. Diction
5. Foreshadowing
6. Imagery
7. Mood
8. Motif
9. Setting
10. Situational Irony
11. Symbol
12. Theme
13. Tone
14. Verbal Irony

Reading Questions

Who is telling the story?
Predict what will happen next?
Why is this important?
This reminds me of...
This is confusing because...
What just happened?
The author wants me to think...
Who should I trust or distrust?
Why do you like or dislike this?

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Resources for Trickster Tales

Selected Children's Books:

Doucet, Sharon Armes. (2002.) *Lapin Plays Possum: Trickster Tales from the Louisiana Bayou*. New York, NY: Melanie Kroupa Books.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. (1996.) *Coyote and the Fire Stick: A Pacific Northwest Indian Tale*. San Diego, CA: Gulliver Books/Harcourt Brace & Company.

Hamilton, Virginia. (2003.) *Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl*. New York, NY: The Blue Sky Press.

Hamilton, Virginia. (1997.) *A Ring of Tricksters: Animal Tales From America, the West Indies and Africa*. New York, NY: The Blue Sky Press.

Ho, Minfong and Ros, Saphan. (1997). *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale*. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Knutson, Barbara. (2004.) *Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, Inc.

MacDonald, Margaret Read. (2001.) *Mabela the Clever*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company.

McDermott, Gerald. (2001.) *Jabuti the Tortoise: A Trickster Tale from the Amazon*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc.

Morales, Yuyi. (2003.) *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, LLC.

Norman, Howard. (1999.) *Trickster and the Fainting Birds*. San Diego, CA: Gulliver Books/Harcourt Brace & Company.

Temple, Frances. (1994). *Tiger Soup: An Anansi Story from Jamaica*. New York, NY: Orchard Books.

Resources and Background Information for Trickster Tales

Carroll-McQuillan, Synia, "Folktales—The Mirror of Humanity." Retrieved from: <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1993/2/93.02.02.x.html>

Doucet, Sharon Armes. (2002.) *Lapin Plays Possum: Trickster Tales from the Louisiana Bayou*. "Author's Note," page 63. New York, NY: Melanie Kroupa Books.

Hamilton, Virginia. (1997.) *A Ring of Tricksters: Animal Tales From America, the West Indies and Africa*, "A Note from the Author," page 9. New York, NY: The Blue Sky Press.

Ho, Minfong and Ros, Saphan. (1997). Preface to: *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale*. New York, NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.

Mendoza, Jean and Reese, Debbie. (2001). "Examining Multicultural Picture Books for the Early Childhood Classroom: Possibilities and Pitfalls." *Early Childhood Research and Practice*. Vol. 3 No. 2. Retrieved from <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/mendoza.html>.

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http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/14919/african_and_native_american_trickster.html?cat=38.

<http://www.eslstation.net/theREALWF/Introduction.htm>

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/14919/african_and_native_american_trickster.html?cat=38